

When collected it looks like milk. It is caused to coagulate and turn black by the juices of a species of convolvulus. It is generally made into cakes a little over a foot long, about eight inches wide and an inch thick.

It is with these two articles, and an occasional deer skin, that all the purchases are made from the traders. They buy various kinds of cotton cloth for clothing, colored handkerchiefs, needles, thread, machetes, axes, knives, iron kettles and pots, a few medicines, and powder, shot, and caps. Their intertribal trade is still more limited. The Bri-bri sell net-bags and hammocks to the Tiribis, and formerly made the large cotton blankets, already described, for sale in Terraba. They buy in Terraba cows and dogs, murex-shell whistles, murex-dyed cotton, and beads made by rubbing down a small species of shell of the genus *Cosua*. Sometimes both the Bri-bri and Cabecara, but especially the latter, carry sarsaparilla or rubber a hard ten-days' journey to Matina, to exchange it for cacao, of which they might have enough and to spare for the mere trouble of planting it. But Indians are, almost without exception, a lazy, miserable, and unimprovable race.

It is perhaps advisable to state that the whole of the present memoir was written in Costa Rica, and it was not until my return to Philadelphia, that I encountered the elaborate compilation of Bancroft, on "the Native Races of the Pacific States." At the date of the present writing, but three volumes of the promised five have made their appearance. While I regret that the information in that work, on the present field is so meagre, and in some respects so different from my own observations, I have said nothing which I wish either to retract or modify. I state nothing but what I have seen and learned while living among the people whom I describe. At the same time I trust that I may not be accused of a spirit of antagonism, in pointing out some of the more serious errors in the work in question, and which, if not corrected, might seriously mislead future students.

Vol. I. Chapter VII. p. 684, *et seq.* is devoted to "the wild tribes of Central America," and the Indians living below Lake Nicaragua, and the San Juan River are here designated as Isthmians; an appropriate name, since the family seems to cover all of Costa Rica and most, if not all of the State of Panama. But the map, facing p. 684 is utterly incorrect in so far, at least, as it professes to give the distribution of the Indians of Costa Rica.

The region of Talamanca described by me, as containing the three tribes of Cabecara, Bri-bri, and Tiribi, and known to the Spaniards under the generic term of Blancos, is here given up to the Vallontes, who should be placed to the south and south-east of the Chiriqui lagoon; and the Ramas, who live in Nicaragua, back of the Mosquito coast. The central plateau, in which are situated the cities and towns of Atenas, San Ramon, Alajuela, Heredia, San José, Cartago, &c., in short, that occupied by practically the entire Hispano-American population of Costa Rica, is here given to the Blancos, and on the shores of the Gulf of

114 Nicoya, where at present no Indians live, are placed Orotifians and Guataras. Further, no tribes are placed in South-western Costa Rica, where the semi-civilized Terrabos and Brunkas live; but on p. 748, the author states that "dwelling in the western part of the state are the Terrabos and Changuenas, fierce and barbarous nations, at constant enmity with their neighbors." Now the Terrabos, as well as their neighbors the Brunkas, or as the Spaniards call them, the Boruena, live in one or two little villages, and are under the complete control of missionary priests, both ecclesiastically and municipally, and are rapidly losing their language, as they have their savage customs, and are approaching the civilized condition of the villages of Pacoa, Osa, Quiricot, &c., in Costa Rica, where the Indians speak only Spanish, and have even lost the traditions of their former state. Again, the Changuenas formerly occupied the valley of the Changuina or Changuin River, the main branch of the Tilaric, on the Atlantic slope, and are either entirely extinct, or only represented by a handful of individuals, swallowed up by the neighboring Tiribis on one side, and the Vallentes on the other.

In the proper place I have noted what can be said of the Guataras; there is nothing to add, until a responsible observer has the good fortune to penetrate their country, and survive to tell his tale.

On p. 753 of Vol. 3, is a very short vocabulary of "the language of the Talamancas," copied from the publication of Scherzer. This traveler did not visit Talamanca, but from internal evidence I believe the words to have been obtained from some of the half-civilized Cabeceras of Tucuriqui or Orizal, little villages not far from Cartago. In evidence of its unreliability, I note two or three of the most glaring errors of the list.

"Man *signa-kirinoma*.

Woman *signa-arigre*."

Here *signa*, clearly a clerical error for *signa*, means foreigner, and the word given for woman—*signa erikur* means foreign woman. So, the prefix *as* and *en* before the names of parts of the body is the personal pronoun—our. *Asas* is *as* *As* "our house." "*I de-As*," is really *then*, the error arising from the Indian answering *then*, when he was asked, "how do you say I," the interlocutor doubtless pointing to himself. Fortunately the vocabulary is very short, but I am sure there are not more than three or four words in it that would be intelligible to a Costa Rican Indian.

2:Skinner E-5 (1917) 1920
SA19 Talamanca SA19
Bribri

43

NOTES ON THE BRIBRI OF
COSTA RICA

By ALANSON SKINNER

INTRODUCTION



BELONGING to the Chibchan linguistic stock are the Bribri Indians, a small but primitive tribe inhabiting the mountainous district watered by the eastern branches of the Teliri river near the central southern boundary of Costa Rica and extending into northern Panama. They have been visited by a number of observers, including Dr William M. Gabb¹ (whose valuable account we have not hesitated to quote extensively) and Dr Henry Pittier de Fabrega.² 131
[197]

The writer spent the months of March and April, 1917, in collecting among these Indians for the Museum of the American Indian, Heye Foundation, at which time the

INDIAN NOTES

VI

2:Skinner E-5 (1917) 1920

SA19 Talamanca SA19

Bribri

44	THE BRIBRI
114 • 000	following data and most of the specimens illustrated were gathered. His headquarters were at Suretka, then the terminus of the United Fruit Company's railroad, running inland from Bocas del Toro, Panama. From Suretka the Teliri was crossed by dugout canoe, and the Bribri were reached by horseback over the jungle trails leading to their small and widely scattered settlements on the Teliri, Uren, and Coen rivers. The writer wishes to acknowledge the courtesy and assistance of the local agents of the United Fruit Company at Suretka, of Señor Alejo Jimenez, Governor of the Talamanca district, whose hospitality and courtesy were unlimited, and to his own wife, the late Gladys M. Skinner, whose interest and zeal led her to endure the dangers and hardships of the Talamancan forests, and who personally collected many of the specimens herein described. The thanks of the Museum are due also to the United States National Museum for a photograph of a costume collected by Dr Gabb which is reproduced herein.
VI	INDIAN NOTES

FOREWORD

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As a result of these field trips, the Costa Rican Government set up, on December 6, 1945, a *Junta* or Committee to form a long-term educational program and to demarcate various aboriginal zones to be used as reservations.

177

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Little or nothing has been written about the *Boruca*, who are by far the most Europeanized of the southern Costa Rican tribes, and who, because of this, are fast losing their aboriginal characteristics. The report which follows is a series of facts concerning the life of the actual *Boruca* Indians; facts which, in a few years, may be obsolete or unknown. For this reason, they are offered here as part of the record of our knowledge of man's cultural changes, and, as stated before, do not pretend to represent a thorough ethnological study.

DORIS STONE

San José, Costa Rica, 1946

[p. v-b]

[p. vi is blank]

3.Stone E-5 (1945) 1949

SA19 Talamanca SA19

Boruca

● 114

APPENDICES A-C

Acknowledgment is gratefully extended to the Botanical Museum and the Museum of Comparative Zoölogy for help in the verification of the botanical and zoölogical terms, appearing in Appendices A and B.

[p. 35]

[p. 36 is blank]

101 of the Tararia, and to the small and somewhat intermixed colony of
131 Térraba in the Diquis Valley, on the Pacific slope. On this latter
side of the country and south of the Huétaru were the *Quepas* and
the *Brunka* or *Cotos*; the first have now disappeared entirely, and
may have belonged to the Huétaru stock. The Brunka still number
[162] from 300 to 400, and live together in the comparatively flourishing
settlement of Boruca, near Térraba, in the Diquis Valley.

● 114 The Bribri have been the object of my special attention for some
773 years past, and among them I have collected most of the legends
and traditions I am now preparing for publication. Nos. 1-5 of the
following tales belong to them. Nos. 6 and 7 have been obtained
from the Brunka. Nos. 1-6 have their origin in the heathen past of
our Indians, while the legend of Don Pedro Cascante belongs evidently
to a period when the Christian influence had already made itself felt.
Nos. 1-4 give us an idea as to what the primitive religion of our

[176] Costa Rican Indian was like: a supreme and almighty God, *Sibú*,
surrounded by secondary divinities, *Sórkuru*, *Jáburu*, etc., some of
them good, others evil ones, and both eternally playing tricks upon
each other. The notion of all men having been born from seeds like

773 the plants is original and possibly new, as well as the continuous
fighting of the genii, good and bad, for the possession of these seeds.
No. 4 is especially interesting because of the rôle played by the

[171] skunk, that favorite and artful trickster of the North American In-
dian legends. Among the Bribri and Cabécara Indians, the skunk

[825] is also a prototype of cunning and subtlety, and he figures in several
other tales which I have heard, but have not been able yet to record.

I. HOW JÁBURU ATE THE SEED¹ OF OUR KIN.

599 Surá, the good God, had gone to see his cornfield. While he was
[776] away, Jáburu, the evil One, came and ate the seed of our kin which
the almighty Sibú had given Surá to take care of. When Surá re-
turned home, Jáburu murdered him, and buried his corpse in a hole
behind the house; on the grave he planted a cacao-tree and a cala-
bash-tree.

Then Sibú, the almighty God, resolved also to kill Jáburu. Mov-
ing away, he went to Jáburu's house, and talked to him: "O Thou,
uncle of mine, let us have our chocolate!" But Jáburu replied: "I

¹ According to the traditions of our Costa Rican Indians, every man or animal
was originally born from a seed like that of a plant. The seeds of the several
races of man were kept in baskets which were intrusted by Sibú to the keeping of
the good deities. The evil ones, on the other hand, were constantly hunting for
them, and this was the origin of continuous incidents, the relation of which has
come down to the heathen Indians of to-day in the form of legends like the present
one.

located in this city, where they are examined, and afterwards a duplicate of them is sent with the statements of results of such examination to the Tribunal of Accounts of *Santa Fe*, so that the officials there may approve or criticise the results of the audit by the *Contador* thereof.

This completes what was asked for in said Chapter 8 of the *Apuntamiento* and I refer to the Document No. 6.

ANTONIO GUILL Y GONZAGA.

Dec. 179 Report of Fray Manuel de Urcullu. Missions of Talamanca in 1763.

GUATEMALA, November 3, 1763.¹

● 114 Fray Manuel Urcullu, in the regular service of Our Father San Francisco, Apostolic Preacher and Guardian of this College of the Holy Propaganda of Christ Our Lord Crucified, of the city of *Guatemala*.

121 In accordance with the request and charge made to me on the 10th day of the past month by the Superior Government of this Kingdom, that, in compliance with a Royal *cédula*, I should, within the period of one month, submit a list of the friars who are living under my direction, stating their names, ages and personal qualifications, the offices or positions they hold, and also the *reducciones* (settlements of converted Indians) and existing Missions which my said College has under its care; and giving the number of the missionaries engaged therein and those that are needed in each year, in order that the propagation of the Holy Gospel and the conversion of the heathen may suffer no detriment; the locations and sites of each mission; the settlements formed; the number and character of their inhabitants; the time during which they have been established; the missionaries who have died therein; and what settlements and *reducciones* are now being undertaken for curacies and secular parishes; I have to report as follows, making an individual statement of all that is asked me. * * *

¹ Archives of the Indies at Seville. Shelf 100. Compartment 7. Bundle 1. Peralta, *ubi supra*, p. 130.

There are seven tribes of those heathens who are known as
 101 *Talamancas*; the first is that of the same name, which embraces
 131 two others called *Cabécar* and *Bicryta*; the second is called
Téraba; the third, *Thórar*, on account of living upon an island
 of that name on the coast of the North Sea;¹¹ the fourth is
 named *Changuen*; the fifth is called *Zegua*; the sixth, *Thorasque*,
 and the seventh, *Guaymí*. Of these the last three are in the dis-
 tricts of the Kingdom of *Tierra Firme*, and the first four in this
 district of *Guatemala*.¹²

721 The Indians of all these tribes are generally brave and warlike;
 for their most common exercise is to go about with bows and
 [411] spears practicing for their wars, which they are generally engaged
 in with each other for the purpose of enslaving the men and
 carrying off the women. The sport and diversion of the boys is
 [868] to shoot arrows and throw spears and they thus become very
 [957] skilfull in the handling of them.

All the men of these tribes go entirely naked, only the *Tala-*
 291 *mancas* covering their private parts with girdles. The women
 all wear the girdle down to the knee, or use a blanket, which they
 [286] weave from cotton or with *mastate* (a bark fibre) which they get
 by cutting trees.

The greatest sport of these barbarians is to paint themselves
 304 black over the whole of their bodies, which they do with the
 [302] greatest hardiness, allowing themselves to be scarified by the
 experts whom they have among them, and over the bleeding
 places they put *copal*,¹³ which makes them swell up, and some
 even die by being cut in delicate parts, such as the face, neck
 and elsewhere. When they kill an enemy in war, they make a
 304 hole with a peg of strong wood and they drill the cartilage of the
 554 nose, as well as the lower lip; and when they have opened these
 two holes they put in each one of them a little bone like a cigar-

¹¹ The island of *Téjar* or Island of *Colón*.

● [114] ¹² The enumeration which Padre Urcullu made was not strictly correct,
 inasmuch as the *Zeguas*, *Thorasques* or *Dorasques* and *Guaymíes* lived
 wholly or in part, like the *Guaymíes*, in the territory of *Costa Rica*; but
 it will be noted that besides, according to his statement, the Island of
Colón, and consequently the Bay of *Almirante* belonged to *Costa Rica*.
 M. M. P.

¹³ *Protium copal*.

175
648 level lands of the great river *Estrella*,¹⁴ where it joins the river *Cofu*,¹⁵ which comes down from *Cabécará*, and the *Ararí*, which comes down from *Vicéla*.

175
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797 Its destruction, according to the copy referred to, was in the month of August of the tenth year of the last century, and at the end of it. In the year 1680, the conquest and subjection of the heathen Indians of that province was undertaken by the venerable servant of God, the Padre Fr. Antonio Margil de Jesús, founder of this College, who had good results in his apostolic work, for in a few years he succeeded in teaching and baptizing so great a number of Indians that they already made up sixteen settlements. But at the end of 1700, those barbarous tribes rebelled, together with those who were taught, baptized and settled, and they killed two out of the three friars who were there. There were Fray Pablo de Rebullida and Fray Antonio de Zamora, and nine or ten of the soldiers who were in the garrison, together with a woman and a boy, burning the churches and profaning the sacred vessels and the furniture thereof. Yet by the orders and the measures taken by the Tribunal of the Royal Audiencia or Captaincy-General of this Kingdom, assisted by the good conduct of the Governor of the Province of *Costa Rica*, who at that time was Don Lorenzo de la Granda Balbín, and the military officers who accompanied him, and the Rev. Padre Fray Antonio de Andrade, a disciple of this College, who was saved out of that insurrection, they were successful in penetrating into the mountains and cap-

• [114] ¹⁴ Among the papers relating to the foundation of the city of *Santiago de Talamánca* it appears that it was founded upon the banks of the *Tarira*, eight leagues from its mouth. Fray Manuel Urcullu is not mistaken as regards the site, but he falls into the same error already noted in the other reports of the missionaries, of calling the *Tarira*, *Tiliri* or *Siraola*, the *Estrella* river. The latter is the one now designated the *Chánguene* on some maps, *Changuinola* upon others and, finally, the *Tilorio* river. The latter is the real *Estrella* river, discovered and made known in 1584, by Juan Vázquez de Coronado. Its course, instead of running towards the coast of the Sea of the Antilles, as it does today, turned at nine and a half degrees of North latitude and continued towards the East in a line almost parallel to the said coast, until it emptied into the Bay of *Almirante*. The ancient channel of the river is well known by explorers, and in particular by Don José María Figueras, who traced it upon the map of *Costa Rica*. Note by M. M. de Peralta.

¹⁵ The river *Cofu* is a tributary of the river *Tarira*.

[P. 5(A)]

- 103 to be employed at least as late as 1564.⁶ It was also known as the valley of the Tilorio or Teliri River and is the plain we call today Talamanca, Lower Talamanca, or Sixaola.⁷

The terms Duy and Guaymí should be examined further as well as the term Ara. Ara was never applied to the valley alone but was used for a province including much of this area. To begin with, we should bear in mind the statement made by one of the first conquerors to touch Costa Rican soil, Joan Dávila: "... they call a town and also a province a kinsfolk (group) of parents and sons and grandsons."⁸ Without realizing it, Dávila had noticed the clan system (see Social Organization) and thereby presented us with a clue to the confusion of aboriginal names in the historical documentation referring to Costa Rica. This multiplicity of terms must have been even greater in pre-Spanish times as a result of wars and migrations (see Folklore: *Recent History*).

- 635 Duy, besides being the name of the Sixaola
103 Valley, was also the name of an aboriginal province and a chieftain.⁹ As a term, it was applied to the region from the western limit of the Bay of Almirante¹⁰ to the lower Changuinola or Tilorio or Estrella River through the valley of Coaça.¹¹ Guaymí, on the other hand, was used for the same area as Duy on the Caribbean side, but extended more to the east, besides including the Pacific slope of the range from what is now Potrero Grande to Panama.¹²
- 103 Ara seems to have covered the drainage of the Sixaola River and to have included the valley itself.¹³

- 131 The Spaniards, not content merely to found

⁶ Fernández, 1886, vol. IV, pp. 293-94.

⁷ See, e.g., Fernández, 1907, vol. V, pp. 123, 126-28. The name Sixaola (Black River; see, Lehmann, 1920, vol. 1, p. 222) is Mosquitia and dates from the English-Mosquito invasions in Spanish-held territory. The Briti name is Teliri meaning "large river."

⁸ Peralta, 1883, p. 71, "... una parentela de padres é hijos é nietos llaman un pueblo y tambien provincia."

⁹ Peralta, 1883, p. 349; Lehmann, 1920, vol. 1, p. 202.

¹⁰ Fernández, 1907, vol. V, p. 100.

¹¹ Lehmann, 1920, vol. 1, p. 202.

¹² Vázquez de Coronado, 1908, p. 51; Fernández, 1886, vol. IV, pp. 221, 233, 294; Lehmann, 1920, vol. 1, pp. 178, 204.

[192] ¹³ Lehmann, 1920, vol. 1, pp. 178, 193-94, 216. It is interesting to note that in 1916 *ara* or *aran* signified "you"; *arí*, however, is "a little child."

[P. 9 (A)]

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[539] in Térraba (Tiribá), a custom pointing to the former contact in times long past between the two groups. It is common for a singer not to understand the words that he is singing, giving as an excuse that they are from "the grand-fathers" in "their old language." This is the outstanding characteristic of the Bribri. From pre-Columbian times, he appears to have been a culture borrower and he certainly is today. This is particularly true with respect to non-material culture and is not only noted in many of their songs and religious manifestations but also in their dances (see Dances), especially on the Pacific slope.

114
[197] The most complete studies of the Bribri tongue have been made by Pittier and Lehmann.⁴⁰ Schuller, of course, includes all Costa Rican languages in his Maya-Carib-Arawak complex.⁴¹ With reference to the Cabécar speech, outside of Lehmann, Gabb and Thiel are the only sources to produce more than a passing vocabulary.⁴²

212
104 Linguistic Symbols. Throughout this study, indigenous terms are written in symbols which are used by the Cabécares and Bribri in their schools when writing their mother tongue. They are based on a study made by Ricardo Pozas of the *Instituto Indigenista Nacional* of Mexico and checked by Dr. Mark Hanna Watkins who was lent to the Costa Rica government by the *Instituto Indigenista Nacional* of Guatemala for this express purpose. It is the alphabet actually in use in the Indian schools in Costa Rica. Except for certain distinct symbols, the majority are those found in the international phonetic alphabet.⁴³

[194] The greater portion of the following explanation is a free translation of the key to the symbols used in the Cabécar primer⁴⁴ (*3is maq ilo*) written by Ricardo Pozas Arciniéga.

194 ɔ is a central vowel which is pronounced as the vowel in the word "but" in English. This vowel varies up to a high front position, and is frequently substituted by the vowel u in many words.

ɛ, ɛ̃, ɛ̂, ɛ̃̂, nasalized vowels.

⁴⁰ Pittier, 1899; Lehmann, 1923, vol. 1.

⁴¹ Schuller, 1923.

⁴² Lehmann, 1923, vol. 1; Gabb, 1875; Thiel, 1884.

[P. 10 (A)]

Bribri
Cabecar

MANNER OF LIVING

- 114 **Previous Studies.** There are few ethnological studies referring to these peoples. Gabb,⁶⁴ Pittier,⁶⁵ and Skinner⁶⁶ are the sources for the Bribri. The reports of both Gabb and Pittier are important in particular with respect to the account of religious customs and ceremonies which are no longer practised. Skinner emphasizes the material culture of this group in the first half of the present century.

There is far less information concerning the Cabécares. Outside of certain documents published by Fernández,⁶⁷ the invaluable report of Gabb, already mentioned, with reference to the Bribri, and the not-too-detailed account by Bishop Bernardo A. Thiel⁶⁸ of his own travels or of those who accompanied him,⁶⁹ little is available.

- 121 **Purpose of This Paper.** The purpose of the present study is to give a picture of the manner of living and the way of thinking of the Talamancan in 1956-59. In doing so, we shall take into consideration the two geographically distinct groups as each one demonstrates a different stage of acculturation.

- 184 **Locational Differences.** The manner of living of the Talamancan people depends upon their geographical location. The northern side of the range is the most isolated, in spite of the valley. Here the rainfall is greater, the forest denser, and the terrain more broken and rugged.
- 489 Transportation is restricted to foot with the exception of the Talamancan Plain where a horse, dugout, or jeep can be used in parts. In most of the region, bridges are non-existent
- 491 and rivers must be crossed by fighting the current. In upper Talamancan and Chirripó hammock bridges of vines are used.

- 101 The inhabitants of upper Talamancan and upper Chirripó have been isolated since conquest times and little attention was paid to the Sixaola Plain during the early days of the republic. In fact, until about 1916, only a handful of non-Indian people including a few Costa

⁶⁴ Gabb, 1875.⁶⁵ Pittier, 1938.⁶⁶ Skinner, 1920.

[P. 34(B)]

SA 19 Talamanca SA 19

Bribri

Cabécar

- 765 of an individual a year or more after death. The best description of such an event is presented by Gabb who assisted at the bone burial of the last famous "King of Talamanca," Santiago. This has the historic value of an [643] eyewitness report of a ceremony which today is impossible to duplicate, and forms an essential contribution to the cultural background of these people.¹¹³

- 765 Only in upper Talamanca and upper Chiripó is this type of funeral still practised, and [184] at that secretly, because it is prohibited by [752] the Costa Rican authorities. The dwelling of the medicine man takes the place of the "casa grande" or big house which was used for the [756] purpose of ceremonials in connection with such burials. Here the bones are taken from the leaf bundle and wrapped in *mastate* by the Burier. Then this is placed on a long bench beside the doorway. The medicine man sings, 533 mentioning *sibu* and recounting the life of the 765 deceased and all his actions, for example: how he planted, worked, what he did, and where he went. The song also gives the reason for his death. If the dead was female, the song recounts her doings. A feast follows and sometimes a dance.¹¹⁴ To the beat of drums (see [535] Musical Instruments) and rattles, the people 765 and the medicine man accompany the Buriers who carry the bone bundle to the graveyard. [764] Generally, this is situated on a ridge or near the headwaters of a stream. Here are located the clan graves known as *py*. These are deep, round holes lined with four planks of an extremely hard wood (*Xanthoxylum* sp. called [824] *suri* in Cabécar) which does not rot easily. The Bribri line the bottom with stones, but the Cabécar do not bother to do this. The Bribri are more particular than the Cabécar in that the bones should not in any way touch the earth. An additional plank is inclined over the top as further protection. Each clan has its own grave which is used until it is full. [614] Today, however, clans that are allowed to [178] inter-marry are buried in the same shaft. The Burier removes the planks of the grave and puts the bone package in with his hands while the medicine man sings, explaining that now the soul has gone and will never return. After- [279] wards, he arranges the planks as before. Chicha

¹¹³ Gabb, 1873, pp. 500-503.¹¹⁴ Pittier, 1938.

[P. 35(B)]

SA19 Talamanca SA19

Bribri
Cabecar

765 sacrificing of a military macaw (*Ara militaris*)
 782 over the grave.
 825

SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

614 certain clans still controls and keeps ritual
 423 property. This consists of drums or gold pre-
 756 Columbian figures (see Myths: *Clan Protec-*
 423 tors). Formerly the *usegLa* administered jus-
 627 tice within the clan. Now the medicine man
 692 sometimes assumes this role although the most
 681 usual method is for the family of the culprit
 184 to take matters into their own hands. In ex-
 423 treme cases such as a sexual offense within the
 clan or murder, poison is given or the offender
 is buried alive. On the Pacific slope, land
 tenure by individual clans disappears. Three
 or two groups, as the case may be, settle in
 a given section such as Cabagra or China
 Kichá, and own land as a single unit.

These people know, however, of their
 Talamancan counterparts and keep as a goal
 484 the idea of visiting, at least to know personally,
 184 the home site of their clan on the Caribbean
 423 watershed. Clan-owned ritual property does
 692 not appear on the Pacific. The family unit
 on this side has been known to administer
 justice, but this task is usually left to the Costa
 Rican civil authorities in the nearest center.

614 Gabb does not seem to have considered the
 114 clans, rather he makes a distinction in social
 565 classes,¹¹⁶ indicating the Cabécar *usegLa*, or
 793 high priest, as the spiritual head of both Bribri
 693 and Cabécar, while the temporal ruler was
 Bribri. This lay head was known as the "King"
 and tradition holds that there were two clans
 of "Kings." These were not inter-marriageable.
 Only one clan of these remains today (see
 Non-Documental History of Talamanca). The
 793 Indians recount that the most powerful indi-
 692 vidual was the *usegLa* who spoke both Bribri
 and Cabécar. It is said that complaints were
 passed from the "King" to him for decisive
 action. On such occasions, he retired to a
 secret and sacred cave which had much *pita*
 (see Fibers) at the entrance. There he had
 sacred jaguars known as "dogs" and snakes at
 his command. The last *usegLa* is supposed to
 have died from smallpox during the first half
 of the 20th century. The clan of the *usegLa*
 still exists, however, in the upper Coen, Tala-

[P. 74]

Cabécar
Bribri

LINGUISTIC TEXTS

114 Attention has been called to the studies of Lehmann and Pittier (*see* Language) on the Bribri language and Lehmann on Cabécar although vocabularies have been collected by others including Gabb. The most common phonemes which we have been able to discern in Bribri are: a, ɛ, é, e, i, o, u, ú, q, k, l, bl, tl, t, ts. Adjectives are made by morphemes while many verbs seem to be derived from a noun or an adjective and a verb. There are 42 common morphemes among which we cite: au, bá, dí, do, du, ea, ie, íé, ka, ka, ká, ki, kú, Li, ɲe, me, mu, ta, tɛ, té, tɛ, ta, sa, se, si, su, uk, ɣk, ʒe.

194 In Cabécar, possessive pronouns are generally prefixes and prepositions are suffixes. The prefix *ɲa-* is employed to change verbs to nouns. There is less use of the stop and almost none of aspirants or barely audible sounds which are characteristic of Bribri. The Cabécar language has recently been studied by Aziel and Marian Jones. The report appears in the second volume of the "Proceedings of the 33rd International Congress of Americanists."²⁴

193 They find that in the language heard in Chirripó there are 31 segmental phonemes, 20 consonants, and 11 vowels. The following is taken from their report:

194 The syllable in Chirripó is the unit of tone placement. . . . The word in Chirripó may consist of a single syllable of any of the syllable types, or it may contain as many as 5 syllables in about 40 different combinations of syllable types. . . . Within the word all single vowels may occur initial (except i, e, ɔ), medial and final. There are 13 vowel clusters which always have either i or u as one of the segments. It must be remembered that these clusters each constitute two syllables since by definition the syllable may contain but one vowel. There are no clusters of three. Vowel clusters generally occur word-final but may occur word-medial. The only example of a word-initial cluster is the word *ia'mi* where the morpheme *i* — *his* is prefixed to *a'mi* *mother*. Eight of the vowel clusters contain i as one segment, four contain u, and one contains both u and i. The specific distribution is as follows: of the group containing i (ie, ei, ia, ía, ɛi, oi, io) all occur final and ia and oi may also occur medial; of the group containing u (ue, eu, ua, ɣa) all occur medial except ua, and all occur final except eu; the cluster ui occurs only final. All of the vowel clusters are of relatively infrequent occurrence in comparison with the single vowels.

Bribri and Cabécar make frequent use of prefixes and suffixes. The double negative is common. Both languages have considerable nasalization and a tendency to use words, even though they be meaningless in the text, only for sound. Likewise, a syllable or letter of a word often is incorporated in another and stands for the complete word or term. A great part of the vocabulary employed by the medicine man in recounting myths is unintelligible to the layman. Songs also generally have terms distinct from those used in conversation, especially the sacred or curing chants of the *ɲawé*. It is usual for Bribri songs to contain ancient Tarraba (Tiribí), which is not understandable to the present day populace.